

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 23/06/95
Distr: UA/SC

15 February 1995

Further information on UA 324/94 (AMR 23/68/94, 5 September 1994) - Fear for Safety / Possible Extrajudicial Executions

COLOMBIA Argelio PIÑA ARDILA, farmer
Custodia ARDILA de PIÑA, his wife
Gustavo PIÑA ARDILA, son
Argelio PIÑA ARDILA, daughter
Heriberto HURTADO PIÑA, grandson
Claudia PIÑA, aged 16, granddaughter - injured

Jairo PIÑA ARDILA, son - killed
Liliana CASTILLO PIÑA, aged 19, granddaughter - killed
Edwin CASTILLO PIÑA, grandson - killed

Despite the personal intervention of the Colombian Interior Minister, Horacio Serpa Uribe, in investigations into alleged human rights violations against the Piña Ardila family by members of the security forces, and the opening of several investigations, no one has yet been detained and Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of surviving family members, who reportedly continue to receive death threats.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Between September 1993 and August 1994, Jairo Piña Ardila, Liliana Castillo Piña and Edwin Castillo Piña were killed and Claudia Piña injured in three separate incidents in which members of the security forces appeared to be implicated. The Piña Ardila family has suffered harassment and intimidation since August 1988 when a military unit attached to the army's Fifth Brigade, *V Brigada*, illegally searched the family farm, "La Argelia", located in the community of Mata del Plátano, Sabana de Torres Municipality, Department of Santander. The soldiers threatened all members of the family present, accusing them of being "guerrilla collaborators", "*auxiliadores de la guerrilla*", an accusation which has frequently led to those accused becoming victims of human rights violations such as extrajudicial execution or "disappearance".

Penal investigations have been initiated in both the civilian and military courts. The departmental Procurator's office, *Procuraduría Provincial*, of Santander, also commenced a disciplinary investigation following instruction by the Procurator General.

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe has reportedly made direct requests to the judicial authorities for a thorough investigation and to the political and administrative authorities of Sabana de Torres to protect the lives and integrity of the remaining family members.

While Amnesty International welcomes the opening of investigations into human rights violations, there is concern that only rarely do such investigations result in those responsible being brought to justice. In the vast majority of cases, members of the security forces responsible for gross human rights violations remain in active service and the crimes go unpunished.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- reiterating concern for the surviving members of the Piña Ardila family who continue to receive threats;
- welcoming the initiation of investigations and urging that they be thorough, their progress made public and that those found responsible be brought to justice, in order to show that human rights violators cannot be permitted to act with impunity;
- urging that all possible measures be taken to protect the lives of the surviving members of the Piña Ardila family.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2) Procurator General

Dr. Orlando Vásquez Velásquez
 Procurador General de la Nación
 Procuraduría General
 Edificio Banco Ganadero
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Vasquez, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 342 9723/281 7531

Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Vásquez

3) Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
 Ministro de Gobierno
 Ministerio de Gobierno
 Carrera 8a, No.8-09, Piso 7
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno Serpa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4) Minister of Defence

Dr. Fernando Botero Zea
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
 Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Botero, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874/288 4906

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Andean Commission of Jurists

Comisión Andina de Juristas
AA 58533
Santafé de Bogotá
Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 March 1995.